

Who really told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?

Gen 22: 1 *And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. 2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah. And offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. (ASV)*

Most people are told from reading the English translation found in most Bibles that it was "God" who told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on an altar at a location that was to be revealed to him. Was that true? Well yes and.....no. Yes it is true that in many English translations it does read that "God" told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, however, it is not true that the Almighty Sovereign Creator of all that exists told Abraham to offer Isaac to Him as a "burnt offering."

Some Definition basics:

The word "God" as used in many English translations is a word not found in either the Hebrew Scriptures or in the Greek writings. It is instead a pagan word that has unfortunately become associated as a title referring to the Almighty Sovereign Creator Power, the Sovereign of Israel. The word "God" is used in Gen. 22:1 to translate the Hebrew word "*al-o-ah*" (A-LWH) which in this passage has the English meaning of "**power**." The Hebrew definition is: *The power or might of one who rules or teaches. One who yokes with another.* This word is often applied to rulers or a god. (a-god "indefinite article).

Correctly translated, the passage now reads:

Gen 22:1, *"And after these things **the power** testing Abraham said to him: "Abraham!" and he said, "look, me!" 2 and he said, "take your son, your only one, whom you love – Isaac, and walk for yourself to the land of Moriah, and cause him to go up there for a thing to going up, upon one of the mountains that I will say."*

Background Explanation:

The offering of humans or of animals or of some other physical thing such as food grains by way of fire "as a burnt offering" on an altar (a pile of rocks) was a common practice in Abraham's pagan culture. But this type of "offering" when done to please the True Almighty Sovereign YHWH was a practice that was never authorized or approved by Him. Human sacrifice was practiced by pagan cultures, but (contrary to popular belief) it was a practice that was forbidden for Israel by their Almighty Sovereign YHWH.

In fact, YHWH calls Human sacrifice something that He hates, and a pagan practice that was an abomination to Him. Read how YHWH warns His people Israel NOT to follow those nations that practiced these abominable things:

Deut. 12:30-31, *"for every abomination to YHWH, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt (sacrificed) in the fire to their gods."*

YHWH tells us in no uncertain terms that Human sacrifice is such a horrible concept to Him, that it did not even come into "His mind" and He never demanded it from His creation. See how YHWH condemns Yahudah when they practiced this vile act against His will –

Jer. 19:4-6, *"They have built also the high places of Baalm (heathen god), to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal-gawd, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind."*

Now read in the next verse, what YHWH's penalty against Yahudah was for doing such wicked acts against His commandments?

Jer. 19: 7, *"I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies will I give to be food for the birds of the heavens, and for the beasts of the earth."*

The truth is, **YHWH never changes**, and what was not authorized by Him in one age and labeled as an abomination by Him, would not have been approved by Him in a previous age.

Abraham attempted to offer Isaac to YHWH as a burnt offering, because he was still subjected to his ancient "pagan/heathen" culture, and was prompted to do this thing by the local power or an authority in the attempt to challenge or test him. In his devout and faithful mind still influenced by his pagan culture, Abraham thought that the offering, of the "thing going up" into the sky by way of fire and smoke from such a great gift as one's only son, as a "burnt offering" would ultimately result in even greater blessings. But, even though the intent of Abraham may have been honorable, and his action notable, we have seen that according to revealed Scripture this ancient heathen/pagan practice was not founded or ever required by YHWH.

Gen 22:11, *"And the Messenger of YHWH called to him from the skies and he said, Abraham! Abraham! And he said, Look, me. 12 And He said, Do not send your hand to the boy, and do not do anything to him, because now I know that you are a fearer of powers, and you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me."*

According to Gen. 22:11, The Messenger of YHWH (sent by YHWH) called to Abraham from the sky, and prevented him from killing his son. It was this same Messenger that also said to Abraham, "now I know that you are a fearer of powers, and you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me." The test was a confirmation to the Messenger of YHWH that Abraham was willing to go all the way in offering up his son. The test was not intended to make a point to YHWH the Almighty Sovereign Creator, who already knew the heart of Abraham since he had earlier instructed Abraham through another messenger to leave the city of Ur, (Gen. 12:1).

The test was never done in order for the Almighty Sovereign Creator YHWH to discover what Abraham would be willing to do, since the Almighty Sovereign Creator knows all things, declaring the end from the beginning.

YHWH corrected Abraham, by having His celestial messenger call out to him from the sky, thereby preventing him from offering his son Isaac as a "burnt offering." In Isaac's place a ram was provided as a substitute offering.

Gen 22:15, *And the messenger of YHWH called to Abraham a second time from the skies, 16 "By myself I have sworn says YHWH, that because of this thing you have done, and have not withheld your son, your only one, 17 that blessing I will bless you! And causing to be many – I will cause to be many your seed as the stars of the skies, and as sand that is on the lip of the sea. And your Seed will possess the gate of His enemies.*

In Gen. 22:15, we have the account of the messenger of YHWH calling Abraham from the skies a second time. This time the messenger is presenting a message to Abraham direct from YHWH Himself, by quoting YHWH, as is evident by the statement, "*By myself I have sworn says YHWH.*" Notice that the words "*from me*" are absent from the quote made by the messenger of YHWH, indicating that this act was not requested from Abraham as a test by YHWH.

Although it is clear that YHWH blessed Abraham for his attempt to offer Isaac to Him by way of a "burnt offering" (as a gift), it is also clear that this act was not YHWH's doing, but instead, YHWH sent His messenger to specifically prevent this intended act. It is also clear, that YHWH Himself never spoke directly to Abraham in this entire passage, but directed the message of communication only through His messenger acting as His spokesman.

Did YHWH tell Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac? **Absolutely not**, in fact YHWH only spoke to Abraham by way of his messenger, never directly, and then only to "prevent Him from sacrificing his son Isaac. **In this entire passage YHWH never spoke to Abraham directly.**

The contrast found in the Greek book of James (actually "James" is the book of *Ya'acob*), is a lesson in faithfulness, not in faith. Abraham was willing to "gift" his son Isaac, as was a pagan/heathen custom in his day. Yet the messenger of YHWH was instructed to prevent him from doing it. Although He never completed his willingness to do the act it was still accounted to him as honorable, since he did have the "willingness" to gift back to the Almighty Sovereign power the most loved and precious possession he had been given, his son Isaac.

Gen. 22 becomes quite clear when read in Hebrew, and critically studied to understand the truth.

The Questions that are answered:

1. Is YHWH not all knowing? In other words, would YHWH not know Abraham's willingness to "gift" Isaac?
2. Who really asked Abraham to offer Isaac? Was it YHWH (who knows all), or was it an "al-o-ah" (see vs 1)?
3. Who was this "al-o-ah" that tested Abraham to offer Isaac?
4. Who was it that prevented Abraham from "gifting" Isaac by way of a burnt offering (see vs 11)?
5. Was this messenger (angel) the same "al-o-ah" that enticed Abraham, or was it some other?
6. If another, then who enticed Abraham in the first place to offer up Isaac?
7. According to vs 12, who is really talking to Abraham?
8. Who did Abraham "fear" by intending to "gift" Isaac? Was it YHWH, or was it really the messenger?
8. Who was it that now knows that Abraham was willing to "gift" Isaac, YHWH or the messenger of YHWH?
9. Who is the "me" in vs 12; is it the messenger, or was it YHWH?

Conclusion:

YHWH does not entice, test, or require any "gifting" to Him by way of a "burnt offerings" animal, human, or any food offered on an altar, and never has.

Gen 22, is an example where an honorable man under his pagan/heathen culture, by custom and local influence was willing to do an act, which in his mind was a show and display of thankfulness to the Almighty Sovereign for his blessings, although his understanding was miss-placed. It was his willingness to do this act that became a blessing to him.

It is unfortunate, that this truth is hidden in most English Bible translations by use of the pagan derived word "God" as a substitute for its true Hebrew meaning here of "powers." Furthermore, the Almighty Sovereign Creator has given to us His proper name of YHWH (Yahweh), to be spoken as a *"memorial for generations."* (Exodus. 3:15). When we fail this simple request we disgrace our Almighty Sovereign Creator and violate His Commandment to us found in Exodus 20: 7.

When the proper names are used in translation, and the proper meanings of the Hebrew words are translated into English, many of the Bible passages that first appear to be confusing become clear and errors will be displaced by the truth.

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